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DE RUEHNM #0635/01 1271330  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH ZDK CCP  
P 071330Z MAY 07  
FM AMEMBASSY NIAMEY  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3447  
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 3356  
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUFGCIN/CDR USEUCOM VAHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NIAMEY 000635

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - SIPDIS CAPTION ADDED

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/05/2012  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [NG](#)  
SUBJECT: NIGER: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH POLITICAL  
OPPOSITION

REF: NIAMEY 625

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Classified By: Ambassador Bernadette M. Allen

¶1. (C) Summary: Opposition party officials are concerned about the stalled trial regarding corruption in the education sector, student violence, and the lack of action during the current Assembly session. Their biggest concern, however, is the recent violence in the north, which they said could turn into a rebellion. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Parti Nigeien pour la Democratie et le Socialisme (PNDS/TARAYYA) Secretary General Gado Foumakoye and PNDS/TARAYYA Executive Committee member Alkache Alhada on May 3 reviewed their current concerns with the Ambassador and DCM. The PNDS/Tarayya is the leading opposition party in the Assembly.

¶3. (C) Foumakoye began the meeting by noting his party's recent communique (a detailed critique of the government) and his previous discussion with the Ambassador on the scandal involving corruption in the primary education ministry (MEBA). He gave donors credit for the independent audit of the ministry resulting in the jailing of two ministers. He complained, however, that businessmen and Assembly members implicated in the affair were still free, and that the case was "blocked" until President Tandja responds favorably to a judge's request that the Prime Minister testify in the case. The president needs to go after the big fish in order to end impunity. Alhada added that Tandja should begin a dialogue to ensure a stable Niger when he leaves office, but some people around Tandja do not want that.

¶4. (C) Foumakoye expressed concern about the violence that has plagued the university and high schools over the last month which have seriously disrupted the school year. He attributed the unrest to the lack of resources devoted to education and the lack of jobs for graduates.

¶5. (C) The deteriorating security situation in the north was also worrying, Foumakoye said. The GON attributes the problems to "bandits" and refuses to negotiate with them. The problem has gone beyond banditry, however, as evidenced by the fact that the attacks have been against security forces and not against travelers, and the fact that bandits do not use land mines. Foumakoye said a "rebellion" was being born and the GON had to stop dismissing it as banditry and begin discussions to stop it. The first rebellion was

mainly Tuaregs, he said, but now it is much wider, including former soldiers who had supported former President Barre. Foumakoye said that he has asked High Commissioner for Peace Restoration Mohamed Anacko to contact the rebels whom he must know. (Reftel reports the Ambassador's May 2 meeting with Anacko.)

¶6. (C) The Ambassador said the international community shared Foumakoye's concern that the violence in the north could escalate, which would hinder development. In response to the Ambassador's question about whether the political parties have a dialogue with people in the north, Foumakoye said the ball was in Tandja's court. He cited Tandja as saying that there would be negotiations, but he did not know who would do the negotiating. Assembly members from both majority and opposition parties have condemned the recent attacks in the north, but called for the GON to negotiate.

¶7. (C) Foumakoye said that the opposition meets with the President monthly. The Prime Minister chairs the forum in which political parties discuss issues of concern, but he hasn't called a meeting of the group in six months. Foumakoye responded to the Ambassador's question about whether the Assembly would address the situation in the north by saying that it had convoked the Defense Minister to address the matter. (FYI: The Defense Minister's May 2 Assembly address followed the official line: the GON has upheld its end of the 1995 agreement ending the rebellion; insecurity is due to bandits and drug traffickers; and northerners are the primary victims of the insecurity, particularly in terms of economic development.)

¶8. (C) Regarding other Assembly matters, Foumakoye complained that the GON has yet to submit a bill for consideration during the Assembly's spring session. Assembly work has also been hindered by the fact that the Assembly President has been traveling for 45 days since the session began. Work is also hindered by the low level of education among many Assembly members. Foumakoye said that President Tandja is consulting with various groups in preparation for

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re-submitting the AU Women's protocol for ratification.  
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ALLEN